

1955

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 22, 1972

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for your thoughtful letter of good wishes which you sent to me on the eve of my departure for Peking and for the generous remarks in your most recent letter of March 1. I want to give you my views on our future bilateral relations as well as to share some of my experiences in China.

During my concentration on the China trip in recent weeks, I have kept in mind your many pressing problems. We will continue to demonstrate our concern for the well-being and the security of the people of Pakistan and help you through this extremely difficult post-war period. You have both our sympathy and support as you grapple with the ordeal of rebuilding the policy and economy of your country.

In concrete terms, we are prepared to do all that we reasonably can to help you with your economic problems. We will participate in an interim debt settlement within the Consortium in support of your economic reform program and are urging the other donor countries to do the same. Beyond that we are ready to discuss with you what steps we can take to resume our previous substantial support for Pakistan's development efforts, including new lending and additional food support.

I gather from your letter and news reports that you are considering early talks with Mrs. Gandhi. As you move toward peace talks, you can count on our understanding and the assurance that the United States stands ready to help in whatever ways might be possible.

- 2 -

We too have a prisoner of war problem and I can well understand your concerns. We are prepared to do whatever might be useful to help you gain freedom for the prisoners, but I fear that our influence on this issue is very limited.

In formulating our remarks on South Asia in the joint communique with the Chinese I took full account of your concerns. This reflected above all my staunch support for the principles that the cease-fire must be maintained and that there be a troop withdrawal to the international border and to the cease-fire line in Jammu and Kashmir.

In my extensive discussions with Chairman Mao Tsetung and Premier Chou En-lai, and in Secretary Rogers' concurrent talks with Foreign Minister Chi Peng-fei, a new framework of communication between our two governments was established. We have started a process which we hope will gradually bring about a healthier relationship--where interests converge, to act with an increasing measure of cooperation and, where interests differ, to mitigate the consequences of these differences. Given our near total lack of contact with the leaders of the People's Republic for more than two decades, I consider this, in itself, a major accomplishment.

In our conversations with the Chinese leaders, we dealt candidly with several major issues. Where we disagreed, we stated our views openly with no intention of manufacturing artificial compromises, either privately or publicly. Each side stood by its principles--and its friends. I believe these frank exchanges lessened the risks of miscalculation and misunderstanding and, thus, strengthened the long term prospects for peace.

In addition, we found some common ground and were able to agree upon a number of principles of international conduct. We agreed

- 3 -

that international disputes should be settled without resorting to either the use or threat of force. We both wish to reduce the danger of international conflict. We are both opposed to hegemony by any nation or group of nations in the Asia-Pacific region. We will not negotiate on behalf of any third country or enter into agreements or understandings which are directed at other states. We also applied these principles to our own discussions and made no secret agreements.

In addition, we decided to take steps to build on this hopeful beginning and to broaden our common ground. The People's Republic of China and the United States will stay in contact through various means, including talks between our Ambassadors in Paris. In addition, a senior United States representative will visit Peking from time to time to further our exchanges on matters of major importance. Complementing these official contacts will be exchanges in such fields as science, technology, culture, sports and journalism. And both sides will make efforts to foster the growth of mutually beneficial trade.

The Taiwan question was also a major focus of our discussions with the leaders of the People's Republic of China. The United States will maintain friendly diplomatic relations with the Republic of China. We will stand by our defense commitment to the Republic of China, as well as all our other treaty commitments. We believe that the Taiwan question should be resolved peacefully by the Chinese themselves, and in the meantime we will reduce our military forces and installations on Taiwan as tensions in the area subside.

My abiding hope is that through this mission the relationship between the United States and the People's Republic of China has been turned from confrontation toward peaceful communication. I believe my visit has shown that, despite deep differences and long isolation, the People's Republic of China and the United States are prepared to talk about our differences rather

-4-

than fight about them and to seek broader areas of common ground. As a result of my journey, I am thus encouraged to believe that prospects for a better relationship between our two nations are enhanced, and that we now have a chance for greater peace, stability, and understanding in Asia and in the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Richard Nixon", with a stylized, flowing script.

His Excellency
Zulfikar Ali Bhutto
President and Chief Martial
Law Administrator of Pakistan